



## Cellular Facility Requirements

As you all know the demand for cellular service has increased over the past several years. Increased demand triggers the need for more cellular facilities not just in San Bruno, but throughout the world. This handout summarizes the local requirements to establish a new cellular facility in San Bruno. This handout also summarizes how Federal Law restricts the City's ability to regulate cellular facilities.

### **City Requirements**

All proposed cellular facilities are subject to Section 12.220 of the San Bruno Municipal Code, which can be found at the following website:

- <http://qcode.us/codes/sanbruno/>
  - Title 12 Land Use
  - Article III Zoning
  - Chapter 12.220 – Wireless Telecommunications Facilities
- Section 12.220 provides uniform standards for the design, placement, and permitting of cellular facilities consistent with applicable federal requirements.
  - The requirements within Section 12.220 are designed to protect and to promote public health, safety, community welfare, and the aesthetic quality of the City, while at the same time providing for the managed development of telecommunication facilities.

It's important to note that all cities are subject to the Federal rules and regulations established within Section 704 of the Telecommunication Act of 1996 when reviewing proposed cellular facility projects. As such, the City's ability to regulate cellular facilities is limited as described below:

- The City is only allowed to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of a coverage gap in cellular service. The City can then review the location and appearance of the cellular facility.
- The Telecommunication Act prohibits the City from denying a cellular facility based on health concerns relating to radio frequency electromagnetic fields (RF) exposure as long as the application demonstrates compliance with the FCC human exposure limit.

### **Location Requirements**

As stated above, the City is only allowed to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of a coverage gap, and then to review the location and appearance of the cellular facility. To prove a gap in coverage, wireless companies must submit existing and proposed cellular coverage maps. Section 12.220.050 of the Municipal Code defines specific location requirements for all proposed cellular facilities as outlined below:

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- Commercial or Industrial zoned sites are preferred.
    - Examples of Commercial and Industrial corridors within San Bruno are (El Camino Real, San Bruno Avenue, San Mateo Avenue, and Montgomery Avenue.)
  - Collocation facilities are also preferred.
    - Collocation facilities are when two or more cellular facilities are located at the same site. This is a preferred method, as the visual impact is minimized.
  - Residential zone
    - If locating in a residential zone, the wireless company must prove that there are no viable commercial or industrial locations that would meet the demonstrated gap in coverage.

### **Stealth Design**

Per section 12.220.060.A. of the Municipal code, all proposed cellular facilities are required to incorporate a stealth design. This essentially means that all cellular facilities must blend in with existing structure or visual backdrop to render it as minimally visible and unobtrusive as possible. This can be achieved by incorporating color, finishing materials, architectural integration, or through new landscaping. An example of two stealth designs are represented below:



### **Antenna Types and Design Preferences**

Section 12.220.050.B. outlines the preferred antenna types in San Bruno:

- Building mounted antennas are preferred, provided the wireless facility is compatible with the buildings design.
  - The antennas shall either be completely hidden from view or shall incorporate a stealth design to render it as minimally visible and unobtrusive as possible.  
Typically, antennas mounted to the face of a structure, will be flush mounted and painted to match the color of the building.
- Distributed repeater antennas are encouraged along the city's arterial and collector streets, when building-mounted antennas are not possible. A distributed repeater antenna is an antenna mounted on an existing vertical structure, such as a street light or power pole.
- Monopoles are permitted when building mounted antennas or distributed repeater antennas are not possible. The mono-pole must be screened from public view and must incorporate a stealth design.

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### **Health and Safety**

Section 12.220.070.3.a of the San Bruno Municipal Code addresses radio frequency electromagnetic field (RF) exposure. The City requires that wireless companies submit an RF report for each proposed wireless project.

- A qualified electrical engineer licensed by the State of California must prepare the RF report.
- The RF report must clearly state that the proposed wireless facility, in conjunction with other existing wireless facilities, meets the federal human exposure limits.
- The City is unable to deny a project based on health and safety concerns, if the RF report demonstrates compliance with the federal human exposure limits.

### **Noise**

Section 12.220.070.3.c of the San Bruno Municipal Code requires all new wireless facilities use a whisper design. A wireless company will typically submit a noise study demonstrating compliance with the maximum permitted decibel level as described in section 6.16.060 of the San Bruno Municipal Code

Please contact the Planning Division at 650-616-7074 if you have any other questions related to cellular facilities.